

Task force after Taliban target

**Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth**

The word comes in. A medium value target has been spotted. Three hours later Soldiers of Task Force 1-501st Parachute Infantry Regiment are in the village and searching for him.

The task force received an intelligence report that a possible Taliban commander was in a town near Forward Operating Base Salerno. Task force leaders quickly formulated a plan to seal off the village and capture him.

The mission was two-prong. Company B flew by CH-47 Chinook helicopters to positions surrounding the village to provide a cordon

in order to prevent anyone from entering or escaping from the village. Company C and Detachment D convoyed to the location and then started their search for the man after nightfall.

"The mission went well," said Capt. William Brown, executive officer for Co. C. "We were able to, within a few hours, mass three full companies at our objective. We had the area cordoned off and had total control of the area and started the search."

In the house where their intended target was, they did not find the man, but found several rifles and munitions. The search continued the next day throughout village

and in the target's house, where several more munitions were found buried.

This was not the only cache that was found outside. When Det. D's 1st platoon rolled into the village, their mission was to pull security within the city. It was determined that they would be more effective on the outskirts of the village. This proved to be a worthwhile move.

"We were pulling security when Sgt. (Jonathan) Wells saw a strap hanging out of a haystack," said Cpl. Eric Townsend. "There were four or five guys that tried to stop us from searching the haystacks."

The Soldiers did not pay attention to the locals and found several recoilless rifle rounds, a hand grenade, a RPG round, armor-piercing rounds and an antitank mine



A Company C soldier uses an interpreter to talk with villagers during the night-time search.

hidden in the hay. Besides the munitions, also stashed in the stacks was a uniform and a briefcase which contained pictures of the target and other high ranking Taliban members, passports and money.

"Other than the guys at the haystacks, everyone else in the village was cooperative," said Townsend.

Co. B Soldiers were surprised at the help they received at one household.

"They were friendly, they brought all the stuff out to us," said Staff Sgt. Jack Hensley, 2nd squad leader

See TARGET page 4



Prior to moving out for the operation, Cpt. Jason Condrey, Company C commander, gives a final mission brief.

Salerno Happenings

Postal, Finance on the FOB

Postal and finance personnel will be available on a first come first serve basis Mar. 20.

The World

Women's History Month

March is National Women's History Month. There are almost two million women veterans, from the American Revolution, to Panama, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. Women have served in some way in every conflict. Not that it was legal in the early days. thirty-three thousand women served in WWI and almost 500,000 took part in WWII. During the Korean conflict 120,000 women were in uniform and several thousand were deployed in theater during Viet Nam. During Desert Storm seven percent of of the total U.S. forces deployed were women -- over forty thousand.

10 Soldiers Injured in Iraq

U.S. soldiers opened fire on a truck packed with explosives Saturday, killing the driver, and three Americans were wounded when the truck crashed on a bridge and exploded. The apparent vehicle-bomb attack was in Habaniyah, west of Baghdad. In Amarah, seven British soldiers were wounded in a three-hour firefight with unknown attackers in southern Iraq, coalition officials said. Three Iraqis were killed, British officials said.

Thousands March for Aristide

Three thousand supporters of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide marched on the U.S. and French embassies on Friday, as American Special Forces arrived in Haiti and took up positions near rebel strongholds outside the capital. The Marines arrived Feb. 29, followed by French and Chilean troops, forming the vanguard of a U.N.-sponsored peacekeeping force expected to number about 5,000. Canada said it is sending 450 soldiers within days.

Godzilla to Retire

Five decades after Godzilla first rose from the ocean, this monstrous movie star is about to take a break from show business. Hit by slumping box office sales for the iconic series, Japan's Toho Co. is planning to shelve its Godzilla films after this year's finale. Toho studios' executive producer, Shogo Tomiyama, said Thursday that the latest movie — marking 28 releases and 50 years of "Godzilla" films — would probably be the last one for at least a decade.

FOB faces

What is the first restaurant you are going to eat at when you get home?



We are not going out to eat at any restaurant, but I'm having a cook out at my house. The food will be very good..
Staff Sgt. Duane Gwynn
Headquarters Company, DFAC

Hooters, they've got good food, beer and chicks..

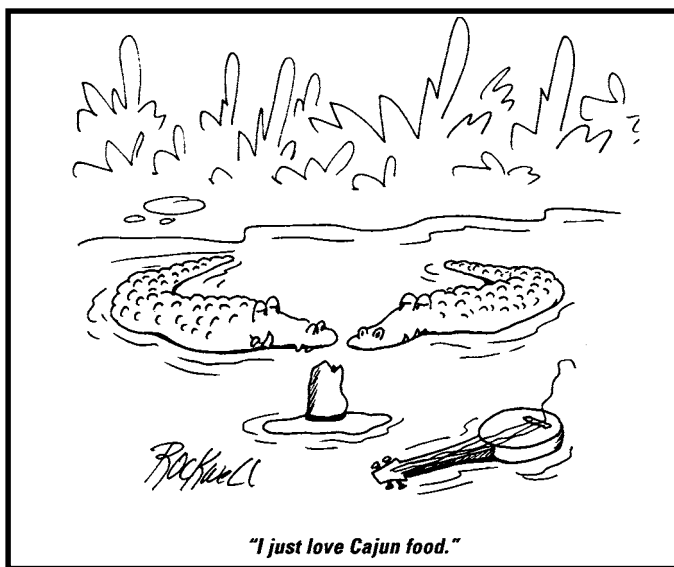
Spc Christopher Glenn
Company B



The IHOP, because I haven't been able to enjoy some thick pancakes and Belgian waffles, with over easy eggs.
Spec. Equanio Jones
3/62nd ADA, 10th Mountain

TGI Fridays, it is mine and my wife's favorite restaurant. We went there for our first anniversary.

Pfc. David Baumdicker
Company C



Industry mobilizing for up-armored Humvees

By Heike Hasenauer
Soldiers Magazine

MISHAWAKA, Ind. — Humvee production in February has ramped up from 25 to 30 vehicles daily at an AM General factory in order to meet the demand in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Acting Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee visited the plant Feb. 13, located about 10 miles east of South Bend, Ind. He thanked workers for their service to the nation, and reinforced their resolve to get the best Humvees to the troops as fast as possible.

Today the work ethic at the factory is much as it was at manufacturing plants across America during World War II. Then U.S. industry produced a staggering amount of materiel for the war effort, including 350,000 jeeps, Brownlee told plant officials.

About 1,200 AM General workers in northern Indiana base their livelihoods on Army contracts to build the High Mobility Multi-purpose Wheeled Vehicles, better known as Humvees. The company has produced more than 170,000 Humvees since the vehicle was introduced in 1985, according to company spokesman Craig C. Mac Nab.

President George W. Bush's proposed 2005 defense budget earmarked millions of dollars for up-armored Humvees. Hundreds of others have already been approved for production this fiscal year, so AM General president and chief executive Jim Armour has been preparing for an increased workload to

ultimately speed delivery of the Humvees to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2000, the Army awarded a seven-year contract to AM General for the production of some 31,474 Humvees through 2007.

When the new Humvees leave the plant in Mishawaka, some of them go to O'Gara-Hess & Eisenhardt, a leading vehicle armoring firm near Cincinnati. Brownlee also visited this plant in Fairfield, Ohio, where the vehicles become up-armored Humvees, known as the M1114 version Humvee.

Roughly 3,500 up-armored Humvees have been produced to date and are being used in peacekeeping missions in Somalia, Haiti, the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq, O'Gara-Hess officials report.

The M1114 weighs about 2,000 pounds more than the standard Humvee and includes 200-pound steel-plated doors, steel plating under the cab and several layers of bonded, ballistic-resistant glass to replace zip-up plastic windows, said Jim Bussey, O'Gara-Hess project manager for engineering contracts.

The up-armored Humvees provide greater protection to Soldiers on military patrols and reconnaissance missions. The reinforced steel plating and ballistic-resistant windows provide increased protection from rocket-propelled grenades, small-arms fire, shrapnel and explosive devices and land mines, Bussey said.

While some employees at



Acting Secretary of the Army Les Brownlee meets a worker off the Humvee assembly line at an AM General factory.

AM General and O'Gara-Hess had family members in Iraq and Afghanistan, many more said they knew someone whose son or daughter was on duty in harm's way. And they knew all too well the importance of what they were doing to help save lives.

An up-armored Humvee on the factory floor at O'Gara-Hess — the engine compartment a tangled maze of melted metal — attests to the fact that steel reinforcement saves lives. Five Soldiers were riding in that Humvee in Afghanistan when it ran over a land mine, Bussey said. The Soldiers sustained only minor cuts and bruises because the up-armored cab remained totally intact.

If that wasn't reason enough to validate what employees at the two plants are doing, Brownlee shared a personal Soldier story that underscored the importance of what America's assembly plant workers are doing.

During one of his visits to wounded Soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., Brownlee met with the sole survivor of a grenade attack

on four Soldiers in Baghdad.

The Soldier had lost a leg and eye in the attack, Brownlee said. He "flatlined" twice during his evacuation. And because his heart had stopped twice and he was generally unresponsive, his doctors feared he had suffered brain damage.

Brownlee spoke to him nonetheless, he said, and held his hand. "His face was covered with bandages," Brownlee said. Just his right eye was exposed.

"There aren't a lot of things you can say to Soldiers like that," Brownlee said. But Brownlee thanked the man for his sacrifice and told him he'd check up on him in a few weeks. As he walked away, he turned to wave goodbye to the young man.

What the Soldier did next shocked Brownlee and a nurse who witnessed what happened: The Soldier sat up and gave Brownlee a perfect salute, he said.

"He lost an eye and a leg, but not his courage," Brownlee said. "That's the kind of Soldier you're supporting today with the up-armored Humvees you're building."

Target: Cont. from page 1



Company B paratroopers prepare to board a CH-47 Chinook helicopter, for their part in the mission.

for Co. B's 3rd platoon. What the teen males of the house gave the Soldiers was around 3,000 AK rounds, 2,000 rounds for 303 enfield rifles, a fuse for a 107mm rocket and 100 sticks of RPG propellant.

"They said that it had been taken from a rival village," Hensley said. "After they brought the munitions out we still searched the compound and

found some rifles. The kids said they didn't bring them out because they thought they were able to have them."

Besides collecting the weapons and munitions the task force members also gathered information about the village. U.S. Soldiers sat down with the village elders and found out what they needed.

"We told them that we were there not just for the guy, but also to do a village assessment, to see what they needed," said 1st Lt. Brett Sheats, forward observation officer for Co. C. "We tried to balance out the fact that we had come in and disrupted their routine for a day with the offer of help."



Soldiers look over the confiscated weapons, munitions and money taken from one house.



Task force members equipped with night vision goggles take defensive positions along a wall before the search team enters the target's house.

During the meeting, the elders said that their village needed a well and a clinic.

Although the Soldiers moved quickly into location they did not catch their target. But, the munitions and weapons taken from the houses was enough to equip a small army.

"The mission was still a success. It gives them less tools to attack us with," said Brown. "I still think that there is a lot more stuff in the village, but we would have had to spend a couple days there to find it all."

Regardless of that, Brown said that the biggest payoff for the mission was psychological not material.

"We showed them that when there is a bad guy in their village, we can show up within a couple hours, search their town and take away guys with close ties to the target."



A Detachment D up-armor humvee sits at the edge of the village providing security and ensuring that no one enters or leaves during the search.

Cook serves up respect in DFAC

Photo and story by
Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth

Salaam-alay-kum.

This simple Pashto phrase for *hello* is one Soldier's way of bridging the language barrier between Task Force 1-501st Parachute Infantry Regiment members and Afghans.

"Before we left Alaska, in one of the classes they told us that we were coming over here to earn the Afghan people's respect," said Pfc. Christian Pierce. "If I say hello to them everyday that is 25 seconds out of my day to give that person respect."

Pierce, a cook with Headquarters Company, has not taken any classes on

Pashto, which is the language spoken in the southern region of Afghanistan. He said that what he has picked up he has gotten from the local workers.

"I didn't decide to learn Pashto, but the job required it," the 21-year-old, Wilmington, N.C., native said. "You can either work smarter, or work harder. If we need the local workers to do something, like sweep out the dining area, I can either show them how and what to do, which takes up my time. Or I can tell them."

He says that by him telling them in their own language he can see the respect in their eyes and their smiles.

"I am not fluent in Pa-



Pfc. Christian Pierce greets Mosafer Shinwari outside the DFAC.

shto," Pierce admits. "I can get around and survive in the DFAC, but I don't know how good I would be in a tactical situation."

Pashto is a dialect not spoken in many places, and Pierce knows that once he leaves Afghanistan he will probably never speak it again. But that doesn't bother him, since he is using this as a stepping stone to learn another language he is interested in.

"Pashto uses the same alphabet as Arabic, and I am really interested in learning that and Latin," he said. "They are the basic languages besides Mandarin. All other languages are derived from them."

He says that the Latin will help him with his goal of becoming a doctor, since many medical terms are in that ancient language.

"Cooking has nothing at all to do with my future," Pierce said. "Besides knowing I will be able to provide my family three squares a day, cooking in the military is just a means

to an end."

Pierce wanted to ask his girlfriend, Amanda, to marry him, but he knew that going to medical school and being newly wed would not be easy. He didn't want her to have to worry about supporting them while he went to school and studied, nor did he think her dad, a retired sergeant major, would be happy with their decision.

So he decided to put medical school on hold for a few years. He married Amanda in August of 2002, and joined the Army the next month.

"I chose to be a cook because that offered the best bonus and gave me the most money for school," said Pierce.

For now medical school and Latin are on hold.

Pierce is just happy to be able to show respect to the workers on Salerno who are here to make our lives easier. So every morning he will continue to say, *salaam-alay-kum* and at the end of the day, *khu-die-pa-amaan*.

Afghan Way..



Pashto phrases to know

Hello	salaam-alay-kum
Please	meh-ra-baa-ne
Thank you	de-ra ma-nana
OK	ba-le / sa-hee
Yes	ba-le
No	nah
Stop	wo-da-n-ga
Goodbye	khu-die-pa-amaan
Thank you for your help	ma-na-na staa-ia- ko-mak tsekhaa



TOP LEFT: FSC's Pvt. Douglas Houck's tent mates did not let his 22nd birthday go unnoticed, Feb. 22. TOP RIGHT: Comedian Butch Bradley entertains the troops from atop a milvan. Bradley and Sam Fidele made Salerno one of their stops during their USO tour of Afghanistan. RIGHT: The real reason the al Qaeda has left our military convoys alone -- the heavily armed squirrels that ride shotgun in the up-armor humvee turrets. BOTTOM LEFT: Several TF 1-501st PIR Soldiers and their classmates hold up their training certificates after passing the Field Sanitation course at Bagram Air Field. BOTTOM RIGHT: Spc. Justin McGee and Pfc. Ryan White, both of Company C, 205th Engineer Battalion, Louisiana National Guard, hammer a roof truss into place on the old showers. The engineers replaced the old tent roofs with plywood and tin ones.



Salerno Snapshots

**PHOTOS BY
STAFF SGT.
JEFF TROTH**





Photos by Staff Sgt. Jeff Troth



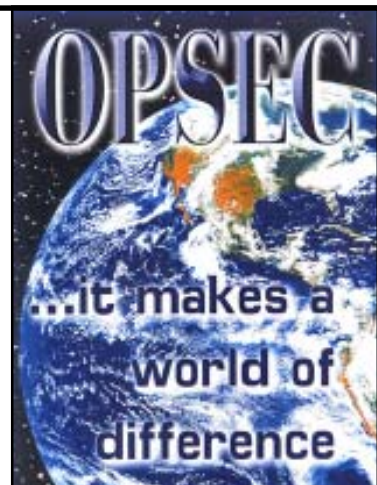
Soldiers and civilians of FOB Salerno celebrated the leap year by coming together in the expansion area for the first Miss Salerno Pageant, Feb. 29. ABOVE: Prior to the announcement of the final three contestants, Lt. Col. Harry Glenn, III, thanks all the "ladies" for participating in the

pageant. LEFT: 1st Lt. Graig "Alice" Cooper's performance during the talent competition helped her (him) win the crown. BELOW: The crowd laughs it up during one of the pageant skits. Runner up in the pageant was Sgt. Frank "Candi" Cole. 1st Lt. Stephen "Mulva" Tegge rounded out the top three.



Watch what you say

Loose lips not only sink ships, but can also give you a free ride to jail. Be careful what is said not only over the radio but all the time. You never know who is listening to your conversation. Do they have a need to KNOW?





ASK MSG NORDSTROM

If you have a question for MSG Nordstrom, drop it off at the ALOC.

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
I'm concerned that I really found myself enjoying the Miss Salerno competition last week. I keep hanging out around Detachment D's AO in hopes of catching a glimpse of Candy Cole or Miss Olga. Can you help me?
Signed,
Been Here Way too Long

Dear Been Here Much too Long,
Well, I'll admit it, I enjoyed the show myself, not sure if I've ever laughed so hard, but you need to let it go. Time for you to get reacquainted with your ol' M-16, buddy. That's the only beauty queen you'll be taking out for a little while longer.
MSGN

Dear MSGN,
The PX always seems to be closed and never has enough stuff in stock. Are they doing anything to fix this?
Signed,
PFC Wanting Some Snuff

Dear WSS,
Well, check out the Chapel PX for

some things – its free and always open. Actually, a request for an actual PX has been submitted, though I doubt we'll see it before we leave. Hey, as long as they have Jewel cigars and keep opening when I want a resupply, I'm happy.
MSGN

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
I never thought I'd ever say this but I love having porta-potties here. Thanks KBR for all you're doing!
Signed,
Happy Sitting Here

Dear Happy,
KBR is doing a lot of great things. Just remind your buddies to take care of the porta-potties – still seem to be some guys out there who missed potty training.
MSGN

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
I heard that only senior NCOs and officers will be receiving service awards for the time in Afghanistan. That seems very unfair and doesn't make sense since there are a lot of junior guys busting their tails to get the mission done. Do you know anything about this?
Signed,
SPC Just Wanting Some Respect

Dear SPC JWSR,
I can tell you that you're misinformed.

The awards are being spread amongst the ranks for those who are making significant contributions on a Task Force level. I'll tell you from personal experience, just keep doing your job to the best of your ability and the other stuff will take care of itself. Oh, and would like some "cries" with your "wha-mburger?"

MSGN

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
I was wondering how senior NCOs and officers can start taking advantage of the R&R program? I mean, leaders need a break, too.

Signed,
1SG Ready to Cutloose in Qatar

Dear 1SG RCQ,
Great question. I've already volunteered to go but been told that they think I might make it too much like work for the soldiers. That's a bad perception people have about guys like me. I like fun just as much as the next guy. And I love the smell of napalm in the morning.
MSGN

Dear MSG Nordstrom,
Can you tell my husband that I miss him and it has been a long, cold winter without him? Please come home soon.
Signed,
Household 6

Dear Household 6,
Ma'am, will do. Trust me, he's ready to get home and make up for lost time. He's doing well, though; stay proud!
Geronimo!
MSGN

P	I	E	G	O	E	O	I	K	W	E	P	E	R	R
S	A	L	M	O	N	L	E	I	E	L	E	I	L	S
M	O	Z	I	B	U	N	G	U	B	A	W	E	K	S
O	A	A	K	M	O	O	B	A	L	H	Y	O	R	E
U	P	I	O	R	B	F	A	U	E	W	L	R	L	R
N	C	L	W	L	I	E	W	A	L	R	U	S	R	F
T	E	P	O	U	R	W	I	N	A	E	O	O	H	G
A	R	A	L	L	A	L	H	E	Y	L	T	M	U	R
I	S	O	F	L	C	A	B	N	A	L	T	L	M	P
N	E	L	U	L	R	R	K	B	R	I	E	L	P	U
G	A	E	A	T	A	A	A	E	A	K	R	E	B	F
O	L	S	B	L	A	C	K	B	E	A	R	U	A	F
A	I	F	O	O	R	E	S	O	O	M	L	I	C	I
T	O	R	Z	P	E	E	H	S	L	L	A	D	K	N
K	N	F	Y	L	Z	Z	I	R	G	H	L	L	E	L

WILDLIFE

How many of the following Alaska animals can you locate in the puzzle?

Black bear

Caribou

Dall sheep

Eagle

Grizzly

Humpback

Killer whale

Moose

Mountain goat

Otter

Pike

Polar bear

Puffin

Salmon

Sea lion

Trout

Walrus

Wolf